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ABSTRACT

This practicum addressed educators' concerns that relatively few parents involve themselves in the reevaluation process of high school-level students with mild disabilities. The practicum sought to increase parent involvement in the development of 10 students' academic and career/vocational programs. The practicum involved encouraging parents to attend reevaluation meetings and welcoming parents' input in decision making. Parent training and staff training were conducted to help participants become more sensitive to the needs and rights of all students with disabilities. Analysis of practicum data revealed that students, parents, and teachers generally found the intervention to be helpful in increasing awareness of student rights; that more parents participated in the reevaluation process; and that students, teachers, and parents noted an increased feeling of partnership among themselves. Appendixes contain survey forms and other practicum administration materials. (13 references) (JDD)

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Increasing Parent Involvement in the Reevaluation Process of High School Level Special Education Students by Accommodating Scheduled Meeting Times, Valuing Parent Input and Sensitizing Parents and Staff to the Needs and the Rights of Handicapped Students

by

Larry Taylor

Cluster 44

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Nova University
1992

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

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This practicum report was submitted by Larry Taylor under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

July 8, 1992
Date of Final Approval of Report

Mary Ellen Sapp, Ph.D., Advisor

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ABSTRACT

Designing and Implementing a Program to Increase Parent Involvement in the Reevaluation of High School Level Special Education Students by Accommodating Scheduled Meeting Times, Valuing Parent Input and Sensitizing Parents and Staff to the Needs and the Rights of Handicapped Students. Taylor, Larry H. , 1992: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies. Special Education/Counseling/Counselor Training/Guidance/Counselor Education/School Psychology/Teacher Training/ Elementary/Secondary/Teacher Education.

The practicum was designed to address the problem of relatively few parents involving themselves in the reevaluation process of high school level special education students. The intervention sought to increase parent involvement in the development of their child's academic and career/vocational programs.

The writer developed a three month program and designed a comprehensive system which included personal attempts to get parents to attend reevaluation meetings. This design also incorporated a component where parent's input in decision making was welcomed. Both parent training and staff training were conducted and deemed important parts of not just a short term solution to increase attendance at a meeting, but to help participants become more sensitive to the needs and the rights of all handicapped students.

Analysis of the data revealed that students, parents and teachers generally found the intervention to be helpful in making parents and teachers more aware of the basic educational rights of all handicapped students. The intervention helped increase the percent of parents participating in the reevaluation process and made parents, teachers and students more aware of vocational options available within the high school, area vocational center and the community at large. Students, teachers and parents also noted an increased feeling of partnership among themselves.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer works as a school psychologist for a large city school district. He works within one of six regional districts providing psychological services to one secondary school for truants and to one very large comprehensive high school.

Social and cultural factors which make the high school and the community/region unique are the diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds of its people. Included are American born students, as well as those from Asia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, Israel and recent emigres from the Soviet Union. Students "bused-in" to the region, as per voluntary desegregation practices, are an integral part of the school population. Teachers, counselors, and administrators of most religions, races, and ethnic backgrounds, make the high school setting seem like a miniature United Nations.

In the region where the writer is employed, there are 48 schools servicing approximately 40,000 students. Of the seven high schools, the one in which the writer is working sends more students to college than any other high school in the city. At the same time, unfortunately, 239 students "dropped-out" of school last year with no diploma and many without jobs.

Writer's Role and Work Setting

The school psychologist assumes many roles. He is responsible for conducting psychodiagnostic evaluations of students suspected of being exceptional and consulting with teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, and outside agencies to help in determining an appropriate educational programming. He also provides counseling service to students and their families with a particular emphasis on the development of students' career development.

The educational training of the writer includes a Bachelor of Science degree in elementary education, a masters degree in special education, certification as a school psychologist, and current enrollment in a doctoral program in child and youth studies. Work experiences include eight years of teaching special education students, mildly to severely impaired, seven years working as an educational evaluator and member of Child Study Teams (CST), and four years working as a school psychologist.

The number of students enrolled in special education at the high school level is quite high. In the high school where the problem exists, there is a total student enrollment of approximately 3000 students of which about 350 are in some sort of special education placement. The school psychologist reevaluates about 70 special education students a year, and also meets with their families.

Currently, the role of the school psychologist focuses on the reevaluation of high school age special education students. This activity is emphasized in order to help students adequately prepare for completion of necessary course work to fulfill graduation requirements, as well as to help in the planning of career goals. The involvement of the parents is aggressively

sought in order to help support and facilitate both the student's graduation from high school, and the student's career development.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The problem this writer addressed was that of relatively few parents participating in the reevaluation process of their high school age children. Parents are notified by mail, approximately two weeks prior to their child's reevaluation meeting, and are asked to attend that meeting. They are generally not asked for input regarding the improvement of their child's program, merely asked to attend a meeting at a specific day and time designated by the Child Study Team (CST) coordinator. Approximately 40% of the time, parents contacted by mail do not attend the reevaluation meeting and therefore, have no input to their child's school program. When follow-up phone calls are made, many parents have responded that the time of the meeting was inconvenient and / or felt their presence would not make a difference in the meeting's outcome.

There are many difficulties encountered when parents are not involved in their child's school program only to be exacerbated by some parent's feelings of alienation from the school. Students' programs are decided on by school personnel who do not know the child as well as a parent and who may not know the child's feeling about career direction, personal preferences, learning or study habits and so forth. Parents seem less likely to support a designed

program if they have no part in its development. Teachers may become frustrated when they see a youngster bored by a subject. Students who may want vocational training but are "afraid" to ask, may become placed in all academic classes, receiving more of the same instruction they have had difficulty with all through school. With a parent involved in a child's reevaluation process, he or she may have known the child's wishes and that child could have received vocational instruction instead of more academic classes. Although most school personnel want to make constructive recommendations about children in general, they just do not know the child as well as the parent.

As a CST member working in the field of special education for the past 19 years, this writer has observed the looks of frustration some parents of handicapped children exhibit. Many parents have taken their children from doctor to doctor in the hope of finding a cure or solution to their child's difficulties. Unfortunately, few total solutions are found. By the time a student is in high school, many parents seem to be just plain fed-up. They may be fed-up with their child, the school, or even themselves. Subsequently, relatively few parents involve themselves in the special education reevaluation process of their high school level sons or daughters.

Problem Documentation

Evidence to support the existence of the problem is plentiful. Hard data, such as the lack of parent's signature on the CST reports, and documented accounts of the school attempting to contact each parent by mail, by phone, and by registered letter all indicate that relatively few parents have involved themselves in the reevaluation of their high school level son or daughter. Additionally, this writer has observed that he meets with about one half of the parents invited to attend their child's reevaluation meeting. The

actual school records indicate that only 40% of parents of special education students attend the reevaluation meeting.

Causative Analysis

First of all, the CST coordinator, responsible for scheduling reevaluation meetings, has been inflexible in time scheduling. Many parents work during school hours and are not able to take time off from work, especially single income parents. There are no before or after school hours scheduled to accommodate many working parents' schedules.

Second, some parents feel that their input is not taken seriously by the "professional." Follow-up phone calls, made to parents last school year, indicated that many parents felt school personnel did not listen to their concerns regarding their children's educational program, especially the parents' concerns regarding vocational training.

Third, some parents are frustrated with their child's inability to do well in school. They have attended planning meetings when their child was in elementary school and in middle school and are just plain "fed-up" with the child's lack of progress.

Fourth, some parents are frustrated with the school. They may be tired of dealing with school staff when they have not seen the positive change in their child's school development that they had wished. This writer has been witness to several CST conferences where parents have accused teachers, administrators and support personnel of providing inadequate instruction to their child.

Fifth, some parents even seem to be embarrassed for having a handicapped child and do not want to face school personnel and deal with the painful realization that their child is not as perfect as perhaps they had wished.

This writer has often heard a parent comment, "My other child is in the Mentally Gifted program."

Sixth, some parents do not involve themselves in their child's school program simply because of a transportation problem. Students being bused, via voluntary desegregation purposes, often live far from the school, and many come from homes where there is no car and poor public transportation. Upon phone contact, many parents have told the CST coordinator that they just did not have transportation to get to the school.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

Evidence in the literature which supports the existence of the problem is plentiful. Work done by Cone, Delawyer, and Wolf (1985) discusses how the lack of parent involvement not only hinders a student's academic and career development, but can interfere with the entire family's social interactions, causing a cycle of frustration. The student becomes frustrated with his or her poor school performance and gives-up trying to succeed, while the parent becomes increasingly frustrated with the child's lack of effort. Subsequently, the parent-child relationship is often in a state of discord.

La Crosse (1982) recognized that full implementation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L.94-142) was contingent on effective parental participation in evaluation and educational program planning procedures for exceptional children. Without such involvement, school personnel become obligated to make decisions affecting other people's children.

Yanok and Derubertis (1989) discuss how the impact of P.L.94-142 has been limited to increasing communication between the home and the school without enhancing the educational involvement of parents.

Davies (1989) also discusses that families and school staff communicate more since the passage of the public law, but concurs that parent involvement in the educational development continues to be minimal.

Lowry (1983) reviewed various obstacles to parent involvement. She interviewed Black, low income, inner city parents and asked them to describe what factors interfered with their participation in helping schools plan their children's educational program. Factors such as inadequate child care prohibited parents from attending meetings when there was not someone to watch other children in the home; lack of transportation to get to a school their handicapped child may have been bused to; school meetings held during "regular" working hours; feelings of intimidation often felt by less educated parents regarding school personnel's attitude towards them; and feelings of embarrassment and guilt for having a handicapped child.

While Yoshida, Fenton, Kaufman, and Maxwell (1978) recommended that parents be allowed to review and assist in making judgments about their children's program, MacMillan (1988) indicated that some parents feel their input is not important so they do not get involved. Comer (1987) cites parents' feelings of distrust and anxiety towards school staff as reasons for non-participation. He feels "professionals" are not always as sensitive to parents' feelings as perhaps they should be. Moore (1991), in discussing the President's first Goal of Education for the year 2000 that all children will start school ready to learn, emphasizes the importance of parent involvement in achieving this goal. In her research, Moore found the most essential elements of a child being ready to learn are a nurturing home with responsible parents. Moore concludes that these elements are absent for many children and often must be supplemented by social services/programs.

While communication between the home and the school may have increased since the passage of P.L.94-142, research clearly indicates that there continues to be a lack of parent involvement in their children's program development.

Although the specific topic this writer has chosen is not a popular one, at least in special education research, there exists much information on the broader topic of parent involvement. The writer will synthesize the broader information into his practicum.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. Increase parent attendance at reevaluation meetings.

2. Increase students,' teachers,' and parents' (STPs) understanding of the basic educational rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parent involvement in the development of their child's educational program.

3. Increase the knowledge and preparatory planning of high school level special education students, and their parents, in regard to career development/planning at the high school and post high school levels.

4. Increase the perception of cooperation and partnership on the parts of parents, students, and school personnel.

Expected Outcomes

The following outcomes were projected for this practicum:

1. increase of parent attendance/involvement in the reevaluation process.

2. greater understanding on the parts of STPs of the basic rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parental involvement in children's educational programs.

3. A greater understanding on the parts of STPs of high school vocational training options and post high school career options.

4. Increased perception of cooperation and partnership among STPs.

Measurement of Outcomes

1. The number of parents attending/involving themselves in the reevaluation process was projected to go from 4 out of 10 to at least 6 out of 10 by the end of implementation.

2. STPs would demonstrate an increased understanding of basic educational rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parents involvement in the development of their children's' educational program when compared to baseline data (questionnaire and structured interview);

3. Increased understanding of high school vocational training options and post high school career options when compared to baseline data obtained from questionnaire and structured interview.

4. Increased perception of cooperation and partnership among STPs when compared to baseline data obtained from a structured interview.

An initial questionnaire was mailed to ten students (approximately the number of reevaluations in a 3-month period at the comprehensive high school during the winter months) and their families prior to the practicum implementation with directions for completion and with a return envelope (see Appendix A). Initial questionnaires were placed in faculty participants' mailboxes with the same directions and information on where to return when completed (see Appendix A).

The survey questionnaire asked for written check-off responses on a 1 to 5 rating scale. Participants were asked questions related to their understanding of; high school vocational options, post high school career options, work/study programs available to all special education students, career/vocational assessments, and questions related to their understanding of basic educational

rights of handicapped students. A structured interview conducted by the school psychologist asked a few basic attitudinal questions addressing each of the three STP participating group's perceptions of cooperation and partnership among and between groups (see Appendix B). Final questionnaires and final interviews were completed by each parent and student at the conclusion of each reevaluation meeting. Staff completed their final questionnaire and interview at the conclusion of all ten reevaluation meetings. Pre-implimentation and post-implimentation responses were then compared and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Possible Solutions

The problem of relatively few parents involving themselves in the reevaluation process of high school level special education students existed in the comprehensive high school in which this writer works as the school psychologist. While the counseling department has taken an active role in working with special education students as part of their case loads, little had been done in the way of involving parents in their children's school program.

Much of the current literature dealing with parent involvement addressed the issue in regard to the younger, elementary level student. Solomon (1991) described a coordinated plan and systematic actions which must emanate from the state level and filter down to individual districts and individual schools. She created a six step plan for schools to involve parents at all grade levels and in a variety of roles. In summary, these programs were designed to help parents develop parenting skills and to foster conditions at home that support learning; to provide parents with the knowledge of techniques designed to assist children in learning at home; to provide access to and to coordinate community and support services for children and families; to promote clear two-way communication between school and home as to the school program and the student's progress; to involve parents, after appropriate training in instructional

and support roles at school; and to support parents as decision makers and to develop their leadership in governance, advisory, and advocacy roles.

Warner (1991) reviewed the establishment of Parents in Touch, a program of parent involvement which grew out of parent's wishes that the Indianapolis Public Schools keep them better informed about their children's progress. In summary, parent/teacher conferences were scheduled to discuss information about each student; activity calendars were prepared for parents of students in kindergarten through grade three addressing curriculum-related suggestions for daily activities with children; contracts were signed by students, teachers, and parents agreeing to fulfill certain commitments. STP folders went home weekly and were returned to school after each party of the contract had reviewed the previous week's work. Weekly calendars were provided to junior high students listing their daily assignments in each class, and a course record was kept on an ongoing basis to help assess course requirements remaining for graduation. All parties to the contract were continually made aware of where he/she stood at any given point in a school year.

Other programs which promote parent involvement and are available in many school districts across this country include Homework Hotlines, assisting students and parents with homework assignments in the hope of making homework a more pleasant and productive activity; Work-Site Seminars, often held after regular school hours in order to promote parent involvement for those parents who work during the day and cannot attend school-hour meetings. These seminars discuss issues ranging from parenting skills to helping children learn to read (Warner, 1991).

Description and Justification for Selected Solution

Working with high school adolescents, not younger elementary level

students, this writer incorporated some of the solution designs previously mentioned as well as some original solution designs of his own.

Initially, the writer contacted by phone each of the families whose children were scheduled for reevaluation, and discussed the project of Increased Parent Involvement in the Reevaluation Process. The discussion covered the importance of the project to all parties involved, students, teachers, and parents, current literature on the issue and, most importantly, how this project could benefit their children. The writer then sent a follow-up letter reiterating the importance of parent involvement and cited current literature in a brief and concise manner along with a tentative schedule of when reevaluations were to begin, not specific days and times. Participants, especially parents, were asked which days and times were best for their schedule via a short response form enclosed, and were also assured that their input was sought in decision making.

All contacts with participants were made in as personal a manner as possible. In-person and phone contacts were the primary mode of contact, contrary to the previous mode of contact---impersonal typed form letters. Each personal contact was followed up with a short note or letter reiterating the conversation and/or confirming an appointment time. All follow-up letters stressed the importance of that individual's participation.

Upon the onset of scheduling reevaluations, a copy of parents rights, already printed for dissemination by the state, was sent to each family of students being reevaluated. Follow-up phone calls were made by this writer to make sure the family received the information and, more importantly, fully understood the information, and had any questions to be answered. A brief structured interview then took place addressing the parent's understanding of

the basic educational rights of handicapped students, as well as their understanding of vocational options available within the schools and within the community. Questions the writer did not know the answer to were referred to colleagues and answers were then relayed back to the parent, via another phone call, prior to any meeting occurring.

In reviewing response forms of days and times convenient for parents to attend reevaluation meetings, each family of the ten students being reevaluated was contacted by phone and an appointment was scheduled for their child's reevaluation meeting. This writer asked all parents contacted if they had any specific concerns about future program development and made notes as to their concerns so as to make sure those areas were addressed at the meeting. The writer reiterated to each parent that his/her input was needed to make decisions about program planning. Parents were informed that they would be asked to complete the same reevaluation forms that school personnel completed. The forms were mailed to them approximately two weeks prior to the scheduled meeting along with a letter confirming the date and time of the meeting. Additionally, each parent received a sample completed form (see Appendix D) along with an information packet.

Parents not able to schedule a school day meeting were offered before and after school hours for their convenience. Staff participating in this practicum activity, four teachers, one counselor and the CST coordinator, had given this writer their assurance that they were willing to extend their hours in order to accommodate a parent's schedule. All contacts were made by either the school psychologist or the CST coordinator. Students were excused from classes to attend their reevaluation meeting.

If there was a problem contacting the parent by phone, a handwritten

note was sent to the parent asking him/her to contact the school psychologist or CST coordinator by phone, by mail, or via the child to discuss involvement in the child's reevaluation. Second and third phone contacts were attempted. Registered letters, with a return receipt, were sent to parents as a "last resort" contact. Phone calls were made primarily in the evenings after most parents had completed daytime employment.

Once each month, for the first two months of implementation, the school psychologist conducted training sessions, having invited parents of students who were to be reevaluated during the current school year (approximately 70 students). CST members were also present. The focus of this training session was on basic educational rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parent involvement in the development of their child's educational program. Current literature was cited. High school vocational options and post high school career options were also discussed. Of the 70 parents invited, 28 attended.

Within the first month of implementation, the school psychologist conducted a parent workshop for parents whose children were to be reevaluated. The workshop was designed to provide information on educational rights of students and their parents, to identify community resources, and to offer strategies for increasing parent advocacy. The names, phone numbers, and addresses of state and local parent advocacy groups, as well as congressmen, senators and other elected officials, were disseminated. How to contact them was discussed. Parents were urged to become involved at several levels of influence.

Within the second month of the three month implementation period, the school psychologist organized a luncheon with parents of the 10 students

scheduled for reevaluation, along with their child and CST members. "Breaking bread" together seemed to allow the participants to relate more freely to one another on a personal, not a professional, level. Barriers of intimidation, fear, and so forth seemed to have lessened, and participants more easily interacted with one another. Of the10 students and their families, 7 parents were able to attend and 2 parents sent notes saying they would not be able to attend. Only one parent did not respond.

In trying to justify the above solutions to the stated problem, this writer felt that he covered several bases. Not only were more personal attempts made to get parents to attend reevaluation meetings, but an entire design was developed to incorporate parent input in decision making. Both parent training and staff training were seen not just a short term solution to increase attendance at a meeting, but as a means to help participants become more sensitive to the needs and the rights of the other participants, and ultimately to benefit the student by cooperating with one another in goals formulated by all participants.

Permission was given to the writer to implement this proposal by the building principal. Most supplies were be furnished by the school. Additional funds for the luncheon, stamps, and so forth were the writer's responsibility.

Report of Action Taken

Weeks 1 and 2

Week one and week two were spent preparing to schedule, and tentatively scheduling, the reevaluations of ten mildly handicapped special education students. Letters were sent to parents informing them that their child's reevaluation would occur during the month of January 1992, and that they would be contacted by school personnel prior to such a reevaluation occurring. The CST coordinator assisted the school psychologist with the

clerical chores related to this activity.

Week 3

Week three of implementation was spent informing staff members that this writer's practicum project was underway. The school psychologist met with the CST coordinator, the special education department head, the guidance counselor and the special education teacher/learning consultant who comprise the CST. The project goals and expected outcomes was reexplained to all participating staff members. Prior to submitting proposal, this writer reviewed his practicum project's plans with CST members. All readily agreed to participate. However, the CST coordinator expressed a rather negative attitudes as to the project not working and why bother to try. This was unexpected. Prior to implementation, this writer discussed the project in detail with her and even sought her input as to improving and streamlining the process. The writer assured her that this project was not intended to replace her job or lessen her importance in the reevaluation process. After a 40 minute discussion of the project's purposes, the CST coordinator seemed a bit more optimistic about participation and seemed more comfortable/reassured with her status in the process. Ultimately, she was extremely supportive and helpful in assisting with implementation.

Week 4

During week four, initial assessment questionnaires (pretests) were mailed to all participating families and given to all participating students and staff. Time and day preferences were also included. A stamped return envelope was enclosed. All staff and all student questionnaires were returned within one week. We received 6 of the 10 parent questionnaires within two weeks. Another two parents returned them within the third week. Of the two

other parents not responding, both were called at home on two separate occasions. One of those two parents finally returned the questionnaire by the middle of the forth week. We have never received the questionnaire from the one remaining parent even though this writer offered to review the form on the phone with her. The parent adamantly refused to participate in the process. Her response to this writer's ask for her help was, "You school people don't listen to no one anyhow."

Week 5

Copies of The Right to Special Education in Pennsylvania, A Guide For Parents (Mancuso, Rieser and Stotland, 1991) was mailed to each family. This publication covers a wide range of topics as related to parent rights. Legal issues, IEP's, reevaluations, right to disagree with school officials, the right to a high school diploma are some of the issues discussed. Follow-up phone calls were made, primarily in the evening, to make sure that the parent received the information. Questions and concerns of parents were answered.
Scheduling of meeting times were mutually agreed upon. Seven of the10 parents scheduled early morning meeting, 8:00 to 9:00. One parent scheduled a 4:00 meeting. The 10th parent scheduled her lunch hour for a meeting. Interestingly, parents seemed agreeable to meet with school personnel in the mornings, even if it meant taking one or two hours off from work. This writer was informed by several of the parents that meeting times were often scheduled during mid morning or early afternoon hours and that school personnel were often inflexible in scheduling. Therefore, while meeting times were convenient to school personnel, they were often inconvenient for parents working 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

A brunch was to be scheduled during the fifth week. However, several

crises at the high school prohibited the writer from keeping on schedule. A female student who has been in and out of several psychiatric institutions suffering from bipolar depression, "flipped-out" in the main office claiming that she saw rats in her desk and that the secretaries were placing the rats in her desk to get her in trouble. A pre-hearing conference took place regarding the amount and the frequency of OT/PT services for one of our severely retarded students. Contacts with, and subsequent scheduling of a re-hospitalization for the depressed student, and reviewing previous records and current evaluative material of the retarded student took much of this writer's time. Therefore, the brunch was scheduled and took place during the sixth week.

Week 6

Being the week following Christmas break, this writer was pleasantly surprised to see that 6 of the10 families invited to the brunch actually showed-up. Another two parents called to say they could not come due to illness in the family. More specifically, both parents had younger children who were sick with flu-like symptoms. Two other parents did not respond to the mailed invitation and when contacted by phone,informed this writer that they were not able to attend.

Prior to the serving of refreshments, this writer made a brief presentation to the parents, teachers and students regarding each categories rights as related to special education. The Pennsylvania State Standards for special education (1990) were used by this writer as the general information source for this presentation. The need for cooperation was emphasized. A list of advocacy groups was disseminated among the participants. This list included parent groups, local, state and federal agencies.

After the presentation, folks helped themselves to coffee, juices, cheese

and crackers, various dips, bagels and an assortment of Danish pastries. All groups seemed to mingle with one another and by noon, the time teachers and students needed to return to classes, the participants were smiling and interchanging dialogue. Just about all participants thanked this writer for having arranged the brunch and asked when we could do it again.

Week 7

Week seven was spent subdividing the 10 reevaluations into two groups of five. The parents of the first group of five students to be reevaluated were mailed reevaluation forms and instructions on how to complete them. All parents received follow-up phone calls in order to help clarify their concerns and to answer any of their questions. Eight of the 10 parent reevaluation forms were received prior to the actual meeting. Two parents did not respond even after a second form was mailed and a phone contact was made. Both parents had said they would respond, but neither did.

Week 8

A training session for CST members was conducted during the eighth week. This session focused on the basic educational rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parent involvement. The Pennsylvania State Standards for special education (1990) were used as the primary reference for this writer's discussion. Interestingly, while most staff members have worked with special education students for many years and thought they were familiar with legal do's and do nots, none knew that not only did a student have to diagnostically qualify to be categorized special education, that student needed to benefit from special instruction in order to actually be placed in a special program.

Weeks 9,10, 11 and 12

Weeks 9, 10,11 and part of 12 were spent conducting the actual reevaluation meetings. Of the first group of five students to be reevaluated, four of the five parents invited actually attended their child's reevaluation meeting.

During the last four weeks of implementation, when the actual reevaluation meetings occurred, it was interesting to notice that the CST members began to dress more formally. The men began wearing suites and ties, and the women began wearing dresses and suites. It appeared to this writer that the CST members were taking this practicum project very seriously, and that they wanted to make good impressions on the parents attending their children's reevaluation meetings.

Student 1

The first student reevaluated was a boy in the 10th grade LD program who was passing all of his classes with B's and an occasional C. He and his mother were very concerned about the issue of mainstreaming. She felt that her son was capable of doing "regular grade" work and that he should be given a chance to exit special education. She informed the CST that her son, with the support of both his parents, had intentions of going to a community college after graduation from high school. The student informed the CST that he "wanted a chance." The CST, through a multidisciplinary reevaluation, found her son to have seventh grade reading skills and eighth grade math skills, which was not grade level, but close enough to where he could have a chance of success if placed in a slower moving 11th grade, along with resource room support, for September, 1992. Intellectually, he was found to possess average intelligence. The CST recommended that this student be assigned to a slower moving regular 11th grade with resource room support of academics three days per

week. A review of his progress would again occur after the first report card November, 1992. If he was doing well, resource room support would be gradually lessened and perhaps even phased out. If the work presented was too difficult, an increase in resource room service would be provided. Mom, student and CST members seemed extremely pleased with the recommendation.

Student 2

The second student reevaluated was a boy in the 11th grade LD program, who was generally receiving C's and D's on his previous report cards. He had a long history of academic difficulties, and since entering high school in the ninth grade, attendance had gotten progressively more sporadic. As of November 15, 1992 he had missed 22 days of school. Additionally, he had "cut" numerous classes when he did attend. His mother's main concern was that her son receive some kind of vocational training which would perhaps prepare him for a job after high school. The student said he wanted to fix computers or repair automobiles. He was not sure why he wanted to work in these areas but knew he did not want to go to school beyond high school. The CST found this student to have fourth grade reading skills and sixth grade math skills. Intellectually, he possessed average intelligence. A significant visual perceptual motor delay was felt to be the major reason for his reading difficulties. Several CST members, including the student's mother, suggested ways in which he might increase these levels. Reading of newspapers and magazines, and practicing math concepts using money as a concrete aid was recommended. While the student seemed attentive to the recommendations, he reiterated to the CST that he hated school and that he probably would never be able to read any better then he already could. The CST recommendation for

September, 1992 was for this student to remain in his current academic program, but with an added vocational component. A vocational assessment was to be scheduled and the results shared with the student and his parents. From this assessment, the CST would again meet with the student and parent to try and decide what vocational training program would be most appropriate in light of the completed vocational assessment. This student's feeling of never being able to improve his academic levels was a concern of the entire CST. Therefore, the CST referred this student to his counselor for work on increasing self-concept issues.

Student 3

The third student reevaluated was a 10th grade girl in the LD program. Her mother and her father attended the reevaluation meeting. The student was passing her special education classes with mostly B's and C's. Parental concerns included the issues of mainstreaming and vocational training. The student had expressed an interest in becoming a hairdresser. Her parents wanted her to receive training at the area vocational skills center. The CST found this student to have fifth grade reading skills and seventh grade math skills. Intellectually, she was able to function within the low average range. To her benefit, she was a diligent worker. Teachers reported that she completed class and homework assignments, and that her social skills were quite good. The CST recommended that she continue in her current program, but be mainstreamed for general math starting September, 1992. Additionally, the CST recommended that she participate in the skills center program during the next school year for hairdressing and cosmetology.

Student 4

The fourth student reevaluated was a girl in the 11th grade SED program

whose mother did not attend the reevaluation meeting. Numerous attempts were made to schedule a convenient time for this single, working mother to attend her daughter's reevaluation meeting. Before school hours were too early for mother to attend and, because she worked 12:00 in the afternoon to 8:00 in the evening, she could not attend after school meetings saying, "I get out of work too late." An attempt was made to schedule a Saturday morning meeting but the mother said she had various appointments and errands to perform and could not attend that meeting either. She finally admitted to this writer that she was "fed-up" with her daughter's attitude and actions. The only time she heard from the school was when her daughter got into trouble. This parent informed this writer via phone conversation to, "Do whatever you have to do. Maybe teach her a trade."

The CST, including the student, met to review her current school progress and to discuss future educational and vocational issues. The student did not know what she wanted to do after high school graduation. In fact, she said, "I might not even graduate. School sucks!" The CST members were familiar with this student because she had had numerous incidents of physically lashing-out towards other students and general difficulty in controlling her anger. Various CST members had been in contact with the student's mother trying to get the student involved in private counseling to assist the student in maintaining better self control. The parent was correct when she said that she only heard from the school when her daughter got into trouble.

A multidisciplinary evaluation found this student to have 10th grade reading skills and eighth grade math skills. Intellectually, she was functioning within the high average range. Teachers reported that the student was very capable of learning subject materials, but at times her explosive anger and her

sporadic attendance interfered with academic and social development. After numerous attempts to try and get the student into private counseling, and ongoing attempts to provide school-based counseling, the student continued to exhibit explosive, physically acting-out behaviors. Therefore, CST recommended that she remain in her current educational program placement. Additionally, a vocational assessment was to be scheduled and a future meeting was to be held to discuss the results, as well as to make recommendations for future vocational training. The need for on-going counseling was discussed with the student and arrangements were made for her to meet with her school counselor twice a week.

Student 5

The fifth student reevaluated was a boy in the 11th grade EMR program. His father attended the reevaluation meeting. The father was very concerned about his son learning a trade prior to high school graduation. He felt that his son had probably made as much academic progress as he was going to, and that it was now time to switch from academics and to focus on vocational development. The student said he wanted to be a bus driver or a truck driver. The CST found this student to have third grade reading skills and second grade math skills. Intellectually, he was functioning towards the upper levels of the mentally deficient range. The CST recommended that he continue in his current school program along with a yet unspecified vocational training program. It was felt by the entire CST, including the student, that a vocational assessment was needed to help identify his interests and his abilities. Therefore, a vocational assessment was to be scheduled and the results shared with the student and his father. The CST would again meet to make necessary recommendations as to vocational training for September, 1992.

Out of the second group of five scheduled reevaluations, only two of the parents actually attended. Two of the parents who did not attend had previously called this writer to let him know they were not coming. In brief, one parent was suffering the side effects of chemotherapy, and the second parent, a known substance abuser, did not come. She responded in a phone conversation with the school psychologist, "I don't give a shit what happens to Jen," referring to her daughter. The third parent never responded to numerous messages left on her answering machine or to numerous letters mailed to her home. She did not reply to two attempted messages sent home with her son.

Student 6

The sixth student reevaluated was of a boy in the 10th grade LD program. His mother did not attend due to the side effects of chemotherapy. His father had died four years ago as result of a heart attack. The mother, although not in attendance, informed this writer during a phone conversation that she wanted her son to graduate high school and to learn a trade. She expressed her fear that she "wouldn't be around that long" and she wanted some assurance that her son would be self-sufficient. While this writer could not guarantee her that her son would be self-sufficient, he did support her wish that her son learn a trade.

The CST found student six to have sixth grade reading skills and eighth grade math skills. Intellectually, he possessed average intelligence. Teachers reported that his work habits had significantly improved this school year and that he seemed more mature. His grades from November, 1991 report card were all A's and B's. The student expressed an interest in in becoming a carpenter or a brick layer. He had worked for his uncle, a building subcontractor, over the past two summers and seemed to like the work. He

expressed his concerns over his mother's illness, but seemed optimistic, at least outwardly, about her recovery. The CST recommended that he remain in his current school program. Additionally, he was to be scheduled to attend the vocational skills center on alternating weeks, in the area of Building Construction. The student seemed pleased, saying, "My mom will like this."

After the above reevaluation, this writer contacted the student's mother and reviewed what had taken place and what were the recommendations. The boy's mother expressed her approval of the recommendation, and then started to cry. She now felt that her son was on the "right track" and that he would be OK.

Student 7

The seventh student reevaluated was a boy in the 11th grade LD program. His father attended the meeting. The student wanted to drop-out of school. He was already eighteen years old and could drop-out without parent approval, but the father wanted him to complete high school. The student had done poorly throughout his school life, failing both second and fourth grades before being placed in special education, and did not want to continue something he did not like. The father and his son began to argue about staying in school. The father even pleaded with his son to remain in school. He made his son "a deal." If he graduated from high school, a brand new car would be his. The son responded by saying that he could buy his own car if he was working. The argument lasted approximately five minutes before the school psychologist asked them to stop. The results of the CST multidisciplinary team reevaluation indicated that this student had seventh grade reading skills and sixth grade math skills. Intellectually, he possessed low average intelligence. The student continued to rebuff his father's plea to remain in school and it

became clear to CST members that this disagreement would not be settled anytime soon. Therefore, alternative educational and vocational options were discussed. The conclusion of this meeting resulted in an agreement with father and son that the son would enter a general education diploma (GED) program instead of high school. He would pursue a GED, therefore not completely dropping-out of school. Additionally, he would complete this school year in the high school. The CST recommended and scheduled a vocational assessment. The results were to be shared with the student and his father. The student was also referred to his counselor for additional discussions about careers.

Student 8

The eighth student reevaluated was a girl in the 11th grade LD program who was also enrolled in the vocational skills center on alternating weeks. Neither of her parents attended the meeting. This student was receiving cosmetology training at the skills center, and skills center teachers reported that she was doing very well, as did her teachers in the high school. The student told the CST that she enjoyed learning how to style hair, apply make-up and do manicures. Her goal was to graduate high school and then pass the state licensing test for beauticians. The CST commended her on her accomplishments, and encouraged her to pursue her goals. Therefore, CST recommended that she continue her current programs.

Student 9

The ninth student reevaluated was a 10th grade girl in the EMR program. Her mother attended the meeting. This student had been enrolled in the vocational skills center in the area of building maintenance. Her mother voiced displeasure about her daughter continuing in this program because she felt that the possibilities of her getting a job after high school were poor. Mother

preferred that her daughter receive computer training. The student agreed with her mother. The CST found the student to have third grade reading skills and second grade math skills. She possessed borderline to mentally deficient intelligence. Skills center teachers reported that this student needed constant supervision to perform even the simplest of cleaning tasks, and high school special education teachers reported that she was a very slow learner who needed concrete aids to perform simple addition and subtraction. She was able to multiply or divide using a calculator. The CST listened to the student's and the mother's requests that her vocational program be changed. While the CST recommended that her programs continue, another vocational assessment was to be scheduled and the results shared with the student and her mother. The parent expressed her pleasure that steps were being taken to change her daughter's vocational program. The CST coordinator informed the mother that no changes would occur until the vocational assessment was completed and the results discussed with the entire CST. Mother agreed that pulling her daughter out of her current vocational program would not be wise.

Student 10

The 10th and final student reevaluated was an 11th grade boy in the LD program. He had previously had a vocational evaluation in the 10th grade but his parents, who did not attend that meeting, did not want him to participate in any skills center program. They wanted him to go to college. The student also expressed an interest in attending college. Current teachers reported that this student was doing well in all of his special education classes. He received all B's and a D in Art on his November, 1991 report card. The CST found him to have eighth grade reading skills and seventh grade math skills. Therefore, the CST recommended that this student be mainstreamed for general math and for

history for September, 1992. He was encouraged to sign-up for the school sponsored Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) preparation classes. Additionally, he was referred to the college guidance counselor for assistance with college admissions, including the possible admission to a college that offers a program with the necessary academic supports needed by many LD students.

Prior to each reevaluation, pretest questionnaires were collected. Immediately following a reevaluation meeting, post test questionnaires were collected from parents, when available, and students. "After Implementation" structured interviews also took place immediately following meetings. CST members submitted pretest questionnaires prior to the reevaluation meetings. Post test questionnaires were collected from CST members after the completion of the10th student and final reevaluation.

The last three days of the 12th week were spent collating and organizing the follow-ups of the CST meetings outcomes. Counselors were notified as to recommendations for career counseling, and vocational assessors were informed of recommendations related to vocational preparation. Career interest inventories, having been recommended by the CST, were scheduled for administration. Post-test questionnaires were reviewed for their completion.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Brief Summary of Problem and Solution Strategy

The problem this writer addressed was that of relatively few parents involving themselves in the reevaluation process of high school level special education students. While the counseling department of the high school took an active role in working with special education students as part of the each counselor's case loads, little had been done in the way of involving parents in their children's school program. Subsequently, students' programs were often decided on by only school personnel, not parents, who were therefore not always aware of a particular student's feelings about career direction, interests and aspirations.

The solution strategy implemented was a comprehensive system design incorporating many of the ideas discussed by Comer (1987), Lowry (1983), Solomon (1991), Maxwell (1978) and Warner (1991). Not only were more personal attempts made to get parents to attend reevaluation meetings, but an entire design had been developed to incorporate parents' input in decision making. Both parent training and staff training were conducted and were seen as important parts of not just a short term solution to increase attendance at a meeting, but to help participants become more sensitive to the needs and the

rights of handicapped students. This design included personal attempts to contact parents and have them attend reevaluation meetings, and to have them participate at the input/reporting level in preparation for their child's reevaluation meeting. Training sessions were conducted and aimed at STPs addressing legal issues, sensitivity and awareness issues and resources within the community which may be of help in planning a student's school program. Finally, an effort was made to have STPs work in as cooperative a fashion as possible to keep this project's main goal in focus---helping all students reach their academic and career potential through a cooperative effort involving STPs.

Restatement of Expected Outcomes and Results

1. The percentage of parents attending/involving themselves in the reevaluation process would increase from 4 out of 10 to at least 6 out of 10 during implementation.

Of the 10 reevaluation meetings scheduled, 6 parents attended in person and 2 other parents made their input known via telephone conversation, not being able to physically attend due to illnesses. Only 2 parents did not attend their scheduled meeting without calling or writing to inform the CST.

The above results are markedly superior to the pre-implementation model of only sending letters home, with predesignated and non-flexible meeting times, to get parents involved in their children's school programs. While "only" 6 of 10 parents attended in person, 8 of 10 parents actually involved themselves in their children's reevaluations. Prior to implementation, only 40% of parents would either attend and/or involve themselves in the reevaluation process.

2. Greater understanding on the parts of STPs of the basic rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parent involvement in

his/her child's educational program.

3. Greater understanding and awareness on the parts of STPs, of high school and post high school vocational training/career options.

4. Increased perception of cooperation and partnership among STPs

Of the10 parents, 10 students and 6 CST members polled, the following scores on the pre questionnaires and on the post questionnaires were obtained. The higher the number, the more in agreement and/or understanding the subject was to the question. 5=very strongly agree, 1=strongly disagree.

Parent and Student Responses to Questionnaire
(two parents did not respond to Post Questionnaire)

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #2:

1. I am familiar with the legal educational rights of handicapped students

Parents		Students	
n=10	n=8	n=10	n-10
Pre=2.1	Post=4 +1.9	Pre=1.7	Post=3 +1.3

2. I am aware that parents are to be involved in the development of their child's educational program.

Parents		Students	
n-10	n=8	n-=10	n=10
Pre=3.4	Post=4.8 +1.4	Pre=1.8	Post=3.0 +1.2

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #3:

5. I am familiar with vocational training options available within the high school.

Parents		Students	
n=10	n=8	n=10	n=10
Pre=1.8	Post=4.0 +2.2	Pre=2.4	Post=2.8 +.4

6. I am familiar with vocational training programs available within the area vocational center.

Parents		Students	
n=10	n=8	n=10	n=10
Pre=1.1	Post=4.4 +3.3	Pre=2.0	Post=4.5 +2.5

7. I am familiar with post high school career/vocational options offered within the community.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=1.2	Post=4.3	+3.1	Pre=2.6	Post=3.6	+1.0

8. I am aware of career guidance services offered within the high school.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=1.8	Post=4.3	+2.5	Pre=2.6	Post=3.6	+1.0

9. I am aware that the school offers vocational assessments to all special education students.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=1.9	Post=4.8	+2.9	Pre=1.4	Post=3.0	+1.6

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #4:

3. I feel school personnel have been cooperative and supportive of parent participation in the development of educational programming.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=2.2	Post=4.8	+2.6	Pre=2.4	Post=2.8	+.4

4. I feel like a partner with school personnel in the development of my/my child's educational program.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=2.2	Post=4.8	+2.6	Pre=1.5	Post=3.0	+1.5

10. I am pleased with my/my child's school program.

Parents			Students		
n=10	n=8		n=10	n=10	
Pre=2.2	Post=3.5	+1.3	Pre=2.6	Post=3.2	+.6

Staff Responses to Questionnaire
(six CST members)

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #2:

1. I am familiar with the educational rights of handicapped students.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=3.7 Post =4.3 +.6

2. I am aware of the rights of parents to participate in their child's reevaluation and program development.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=5.0 Post=5.0 (no change)

3. I feel school personnel have been cooperative and supportive of parent participation in program development.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=3.0 Post=4.0 +1.0

4. Parents are helpful in developing educational programs.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=2.7 Post=3.5 +.8

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #3:

6. I am familiar with vocational training options available within the high school.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=3.5 Post=4.0 +.5

7. I am familiar with vocational training programs available within the area vocational center.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre2.5 Post=3.5 +1.0

8. I am familiar with post high school career/vocational options available within the community.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre=2.3 Post=3.3 +1.0

9. I am aware that the school offers vocational assessments to all special education students.
   n=6 n=6
   Pre4.0 Post=4.5 +.5

Questions Related to Expected Outcome #4:

5. I feel parents are my "partners" in the development of their children's educational programs.

n=6 n=6
Pre=2.7 Post=3.5 +.8

10. Students, teacher and parents need to work more cooperatively in program development.

n=6 n=6
Pre=5.0 Post=5.0 (no change)

Responses to Structured Interviews

(administered to 10 parents and 6 CST members--two parents did not respond to "post intervention" interviews)

yes or no were to be circled

1. Are you familiar with the basic educational rights of handicapped children?

n=16 n=14
Pre=.6 Post=.9 +.3

2. Are you familiar with high school vocational options?

n=16 n=14
Pre=.5 Post=.8 +.3

3. Are you familiar with post high school vocational options?

n=16 n=14
Pre=.4 Post=.7 +.3

4. Do you contribute to the development of your child's/student's educational program?

n=16 n=14
Pre=.7 Post=.9 +.2

5. Do you want to participate in a joint effort with parents, teachers and students in the development of your child's/student's educational program?

n=16 n=14
Pre=.8 Post=1.0 +.2

Discussion and Interpretation

Results of implementation indicated that more parents involved themselves in the reevaluation process of their high school level special education children's school program. Additionally, levels of understanding in almost every area addressed showed a rise in understanding on the part of each reporting group. The areas not showing an increase in understanding remained the same with perfect understanding on both pre data and post data. With 6 out of 10 parents actually attending their children's reevaluation meetings, and another 2 out of 10 parents involving themselves in their children's school program development, (although not physically attending the meeting), a rise in parent involvement of 50% from pre-implementation becomes evident. Further analysis of the data reveals that:

1. Students, parents and teachers generally found the intervention to be helpful in making them more aware of the basic educational rights of all handicapped students, and in fact, helped increase parent participation/involvement from 4 out of 10 to 8 out of 10.

2. Students, parents and teachers indicated a greater understanding of basic rights of handicapped students, including the importance of parental involvement in his/her child's educational program.

3. Students, parents and teachers became more aware of career/vocational options available within the high school, area vocational center and the community at large.

4. Students, parents and teachers noted an increased perception of cooperation and partnership among themselves.

These results certainly suggest that the process of personally encouraging parents to involve themselves in their children's school program,

and offering them parent training in an effort to allow the them to help their children achieve academic and career/vocational objectives, was a constructive project to undertake. While the parents were prepared to assist their children in decision making, teachers were prepared to help the parents achieve this. Both school personnel and parents worked cooperatively. Hopefully, students will benefit from multiple support groups and achieve their academic and career/vocational objectives.

Interestingly, of the10 students reevaluated, 7 of the students showed improvement in their report cards from first report card in November, 1991, to second report card in February, 1992. Four students went up one grade in at least two subjects, while three other students went up two grades in three subjects. Of these seven students, not one of them went down in any of their grades. Of the three other students in this project, one did about the same on both report cards and the other two went down one grade in two subjects. Coincidentally, implementation began the middle of November when the first report card was issued, and concluded towards the end of February when the second report card was issued.

While one can not jump to conclusions regarding these results on report cards, it appears that parent involvement stimulates interest not only on the parts of parents, but on the parts of students and teachers as well. When STPs are working cooperatively, all parties seem to benefit.

Parents involving themselves in their children's school program supports the position of responsible parenting as cited by Moore (1991) when discussing the President's first Goal of Education for the year 2000--- the most essential element of a child being ready to learn is a nurturing home with responsible parents. Additionally, this practicum project follows Yoshida, Fenton, Kaufman

and Maxwell's (1978) recommendation that parents be allowed to review and assist in making judgments about their children's programs.

By personally attempting to contact and interact with parents, the writer attempted to address Comer's (1987) research indicating parents' feelings of distrust and anxiety towards school staff as reasons for non-participation. All parents were contacted via phone calls and were encouraged to participate in their children's school programming.

The flexibility in the scheduling of reevaluation meetings addressed Lowry's (1983) obstacle to parent involvement. Meetings were scheduled at the parents' convenience and accommodations on the part of the school, such as class coverage, was made to allow CST members to attend these meetings.

The encouragement of parent input in decision making followed McMillan's (1988) research, which indicated that some parents felt their input was not considered important by school personnel, so they did not get involved. In this project, parents were encouraged to participate and their input was sought. They completed reevaluation forms much the same as teachers and itinerant staff did. Via phone conversations with this writer, their concerns were also uncovered.

Finally, Comer (1987) felt that "professionals" were not always as sensitive to parents' feelings as perhaps they should be. The intermingling of parents and teachers in both social and professional capacities, along with staff/parent training which addressed sensitivity and awareness issues, hopefully lessened these feelings.

Recommendations

1. Do away with mass mailings to involve parents in their children school program and replace them with personal contacts made by teachers,

counselors, administrators and itinerant staff who know the particular student well.

2. Be flexible in the scheduling of meeting times. Most parents work "regular" hours and are not always able to attend meetings 9 AM. to 3 PM. Scheduling of before and after school hours is most necessary to physically getting parents involved.

3. Encourage parents to complete informational forms regarding their children, much the same way as teachers are required to do, and read/implement their suggestions whenever possible. This may demonstrate to parents, concretely, that school personnel are really interested in their input and, in fact, respond to their suggestions.

4. Provide training to staff, parents and students regarding issues effecting them. Knowledgeable individuals may make more reasonable and constructive decisions then individuals who make decisions on the basis of hear-say. Sensitivity and awareness issues are extremely important.

5. Involve community agencies and resources when possible. Broaden the scope of delivery services from school-based to the larger community-based.

In conclusion, it is most important that home, school and community work in as cooperative a fashion as possible to maximize each special education student's academic, social and vocation potential. With less federal dollars available to schools throughout the nation, we "points of light" need to assume responsibilities above and beyond what our normal job descriptions require.

Dissemination

This practicum report will be disseminated among the 14 other school psychologists working within the region of the city this writer is employed. The writer's purpose of disseminating this information is to try and alter, using this

practicum project design, the way parents are usually asked to participate in meetings regarding their children. Hopefully, the attitudes and the perceptions of parents, teachers and students will be changed from an often adversarial one, to one of cooperation and mutual respect.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY FORMS

Questionnaire
(Parent and Student)

circle number:
5=very strongly agree
4=strongly agree
3=agree
2=disagree
1=strongly disagree

1. I am familiar with the legal educational rights of handicapped students. 5 4 3 2 1

2. I am aware that parents are to be involved in the development of their child's educational program. 5 4 3 2 1

3. I feel school personnel have been cooperative and supportive of parent participation in the development of educational programming. 5 4 3 2 1

4. I feel like a partner with school personnel in the development of my/my child's educational program. 5 4 3 2 1

5. I am familiar with vocational training options available within the high school. 5 4 3 2 1

6. I am familiar with vocational training programs available within the area vocational center. 5 4 3 2 1

7. I am familiar with post high school career/vocational options offered within the community. 5 4 3 2 1

8. I am aware of career guidance services offered within the high school. 5 4 3 2 1

9. I am aware that the school offers vocational assessments to all special education students. 5 4 3 2 1

10. I am pleased with my/ my child's school program. 5 4 3 2 1

Additional Comments: (optional-use reverse side if necessary)

Questionnaire
(Staff)

circle number:
5=very strongly agree
4=strongly agree
3=agree
2=disagree
1=strongly disagree

1. I am familiar with the educational rights of handicapped students. 5 4 3 2 1

2. I am aware of the rights of parents to participate in their child's reevaluation and program development. 5 4 3 2 1

3. I feel school personnel have been cooperative and supportive of parent participation in program development. 5 4 3 2 1

4. Parents are helpful in developing educational programs. 5 4 3 2 1

5. I feel parents are my "partners" in the development of their children's educational program. 5 4 3 2 1

6. I am familiar with vocational training options available within the high school. 5 4 3 2 1

7. I am familiar with vocational training programs available within the area vocational center. 5 4 3 2 1

8. I am familiar with post high school career/vocational options available within the community. 5 4 3 2 1

9. I am aware that the school offers vocational assessments to all special education students. 5 4 3 2 1

10. Students, teachers, and parents need to work more cooperatively in program development. 5 4 3 2 1

Additional Comments: (optional-use reverse side if necessary)

APPENDIX B

STRUCTURED INTERVIEW

INTERVIEW

1. Are you familiar with the basic educational rights of handicapped children?

yes or no

Briefly Explain;

2. Are you familiar with high school vocational options?

yes or no

Briefly Explain;

3. Are you familiar with post high school vocational options?

yes or no

Briefly Explain;

4. Do you contribute to the development of your child's/student's educational program?

yes or no

Briefly Explain;

5. Do you want to participate in a joint effort with parents, students and teachers in the development of your child's/student's educational program?

yes or no

Briefly Explain;

APPENDIX C

CHILD STUDY TEAM RECORD FORM

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF
STUDENT EVALUATION RECORD - T 710 C
SUMMARY

☐ INITIAL EVALUATION
☐ RE-EVALUATION
☐ MENTALLY GIFTED

STUDENT NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)	DATE OF BIRTH	SCHOOL
ADDRESS	PARENT/GUARDIAN	MEETING DATE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

Exceptionality _____

Program _____

Related Services (Type, Level, Frequency) _____

Comments: _____

Non-Exceptional – Recommendations to Pupil Support Committee _____

DISSENTING OPINIONS:

PARTICIPANTS:

Name	Position

DISTRICT OFFICE ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW:

DOCUMENTED BY	POSITION	DATE
	59	

APPENDIX D

PARENT LETTER AND REPORTING FORM

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
BUSTLETON AVENUE AND VERREE ROAD
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19116
961-2001

*DATE*_____

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Enclosed please find a Parent Reporting Form. This form is to provide you with the opportunity to have input in your child's educational program plan. Parents have a great understanding of their child's interests and abilities. The Child Study Team (CST) would like to share in that information and, as always, encourages parents to involve themselves in their child's program development.

Please return the enclosed form within ten (10) days of the above date. Your input is both appreciated and imperative in order to assist the CST in making an appropriate educational and vocational plan for your child.

THE CST

LARRY TAYLOR--SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST
HOWARD LEVY--SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT CHAIRPERSON
BESSIE GRAY--ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
MICHELE LEFTWICH--MDT/IEP COORDINATOR

GEORGE WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL
COMPREHENSIVE MULTIDISCIPLINARY
PARENT EVALUATION REPORT

PARENT NAME:_____ DATE:_____
STUDENT NAME:_____ BOOK#_____

1. CONCERNS:
   - [ ] GRADES
   - [ ] ATTENDANCE
   - [ ] ACADEMIC PROGRESS
   - [ ] VOCATIONAL ASSESSMENT
   - [ ] VOCATIONAL TRAINING OPTIONS
   - [ ] CONTINUING EDUCATION
   - [ ] COUNSELING (SCHOOL BASED AND COMMUNITY)
   - [ ] COURSE SELECTION
   - [ ] MAINSTREAMING OPTIONS
   - [ ] HOMEWORK

2. PLEASE PROVIDE ANY BACKGROUND INFORMATION THAT WILL ENABLE THE MDT TO MAKE APPROPRIATE EDUCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL DECISIONS.

   LIKES:

   DISLIKES:

3. PLEASE USE THE SPACE PROVIDED BELOW TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE MDT CONCERNING THE PROGRAM OR PLACEMENT OF YOUR CHILD.

APPENDIX E

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

PARENT SUPPORT GROUPS

Parents Union
401 North Broad Street, Suite 895
Philadelphia, PA 19108
Executive Coordinator: Chris Davis
574-0337

This group provides information about education in public schools and special education advocacy efforts.

Al-Anon/Ala-Teen
4021 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
222-5244

These are support groups for adults and/or teens who have family members with alcohol problems.

Alliance of the Mentally Ill of Eastern Pennsylvania (AMI)
P.O. Box 126
Oreland, PA 19075
572-1394

AMI offers support groups for families and friends of mentally ill people. Chapters meet at various locations throughout Eastern Pennsylvania.

American Anorexia/Bulimia Association of Philadelphia
Philadelphia Child Guidance Clinic
34th Street & Civic Center Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Administrator: Pat Snyder
244-2225

These are support groups for families of anorectics and bulimics.

Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC/Philadelphia)
2350 West Westmoreland Street
Philadelphia, PA 19140
Executive Director: E. A. Gentile
229-4550

The Parent Specialist Education Program is an educational course for parents of individuals with handicaps.

Charles R. Drew Community MH/MR Center, Inc.
Catchment Area 5A
1006-12 West Lehigh Avenue
Philadelphia PA 19140
Contact: Domenico Cavaiuolo
227-8974

This Center provides parent effectiveness training for residents of Catchment Area 5A only. (see map p. 10)

Child Abuse Prevention Effort
5245 Oxford Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19124
Administrator: Ann McClintock
831-8228

This group teaches parenting skills to parents who are afraid they may abuse their children.

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Philadelphia, PA 19108
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574-0337

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